

**John King
remembered**



a man of Botley

John King 1860-1923



INTRODUCTION

From my childhood, I can remember John King, as will several elderly residents in the village.

He lived in Boorley Green, one of a family of twelve, and the reminiscences of his sister Mary (Polly) reprinted herein portray their family life style.

John was a Postman, and is specially remembered, for his writings of hymns & poems.

He was often to be seen on his tricycle, or trudging along the country lanes, with his post-bag over his shoulder.

Doubtless his inspiration came from his simple faith in God, and the beauty and peace of the countryside.

At our annual Flower Service, in Botley Church, it was his joy to hear his "Flower Hymns" sung by the large congregation, while the children presented bunches of primroses and wild daffodils at the Altar.

Afterwards they were taken to Moorgreen and Southampton Hospitals.

His hymn "In time of war" was frequently sung at Matins, during the first World War 1914-1918.

John died on 9th February 1923, and at his funeral the Pall-bearers were five local Post-men, Messrs Cull, Harding, Knight, Kett, and West.

The Historical Exhibition in Botley Church, has provided me with an opportunity to compile this selection of John King's writings, which, I feel, should be preserved.

I am most grateful to Mr. Gary Chase, Mr. John Cobbold, Miss Beryl Cook, Mr. Bernard and Mrs Kathleen Dibley, Mrs. Marjorie Douch, Lt.-Cdr. William Harding RN (Retd), Mr. Dennis King, Mr. Gordon West, and to my sisters, all of whom have helped me in various ways with the publication of this pamphlet, and particularly to the Reverend Andrew Stamp for all his guidance and invaluable assistance.

Ethel Maffey.

Ethel Maffey APRIL 1989

All Saints, Botley, Parish Magazine.

Rev F. W. HADFIELD, Rector.

Services—

Sundays—Holy Communion 8.0 a.m. 1st & 3rd Sundays, Midday. Occasionally 7.0 a.m. and 10.0 a.m. by notice.

Children's Service 10.0 a.m.

Mattins 11 a.m. Evensong 6.30 p.m.

Week-Days and Holy Days—Holy Communion as announced.

The Rector will gladly bring Sick-Communion to invalids or to the aged if they will ring Botley 218 or send a post card.

My dear people,

Botley Rectory, 21st Oct, 1950.

I think it would be churlish of me not to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to those who have told me how helpful they found last month's letter. That God should use stupid, inarticulate me with my very old typewriter in this way fills me with wonderment and humility. But I am glad it helped a bit; and if any of you haven't read it, it might be a good thing to snatch last month's Magazine from the fire-lighting box, and read it in case it might help you.

My letter this month is to be very short as I am most anxious to include an instalment of Miss King's reminiscences. They should prove of great interest to the older people in the village, recalling memories of the past; and also to the younger end, giving them a vignette of "life in old Botley." Times were hard, and conditions difficult, but the days bred sturdy, wise and disciplined characters. We ought to be most grateful to Miss King, affectionately and most respectfully known to us as "Aunt Polly." Long may she be with us to write more of her reminiscences. I am most grateful too, to Mrs Jenkyns, her Editor on this occasion.

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The Reminiscences of Miss Mary King.

Being now in my 87th year, I am setting down some of my memories of early days which now seem so very far off.

I was born in 1863, the tenth of a family of twelve, all of whom lived to be about 70, one to 86 and one to 87. Canon Lee used to tell me I was the tithe—set apart for service—dedicated.

My father worked in the woods making hoops for barrels. Undergrowth was cut every seven years, and hoops supplied to the Guillaume's cooperage business. They made a shelter or chip house wherever they might be working. Hurdles were made on the same ground by hurdlers, a separate craft. All would break off to lend a hand with the harvest which was cut by sickle.

My brothers all began by joining my father in this work, though later they took up other occupations. Brother Ted became a farmer; first at Longlands, later at Ropley, and finally he kept a shop for vegetables and dry goods at Eastleigh. Brother Charlie was Toll-keeper on the Winchester Road under a Mr. Gooding who contracted for that and the Toll-house near Cricketers' Pond. Brother Alfred was apprenticed to a baker, Hollis, who worked at the corner house across Church Lane from the Catherine Wheel. It had formerly been an Inn—"The Gate Hangs High."

When I was born my parents lived in one of a row of cottages where the Fire Station now stands. When I was four we moved to a larger house in Shamblehurst Lane, but that meant a very long walk to School. We took our dinners with us to School. There was a Schoolmaster and two pupil teachers and a Mrs. Trodd and her daughter who taught us sewing every afternoon. They worked beautifully; Mrs. Trodd only allowed us half-yard of cotton at a time lest it should get dirty. We made clothes for trousseaux with tiny tucks and insertions, and every day four of the senior girls stayed behind in turn to clean the School. I loved School. We always had a summer School Treat in the Rectory Field, and at Christmas a tree given by the Rector and Mrs. Lee. On Sundays we had to be at School by 9.30, and at 10.30 we paraded in the School yard and marched across, two and two, to the service at 11. It was a long service with a long sermon, and it was sometimes 1 o'clock before we were out: then quickly home to dinner, and back to afternoon School at 3. Every fourth Sunday the whole School attended "Christening Sunday" at Church. In the evening Brother John would play his concertina while the family sang hymns, and before we went to bed we all got out our Bibles and read a portion round, verse by verse.

I must tell you that I was a Sunday School Teacher for twelve years with infant boys just starting. I often had 30 boys in class, and Miss Fisher had a class in the same room. Her father was butcher before Lewry; she became Mrs. Adams and lived on in Blenheim Cottage. Each class had one teacher for the morning and one for the afternoon.

I was 21 years in the G.F.S. We had monthly meetings at the Rectory and enjoyed them, there being about 30 members each time. Then there were the Temperance Meetings to go to; they had a mixed choir which I joined with my brothers who all sang well. My father, as a boy, had such a beautiful voice that one day, when he was walking along singing, a gentleman stopped him and said, "My boy, if you had a good education you could make a fortune with that voice." They used to sing at the Temperance Concerts and in the Market Hall. Miss Flora Blackman played the piano, and Mr. Arthur Jenkyns gave amusing Readings. Sergeant and Mrs. Hewett, who lived with their family at Red House, often brought us good performers.

My father and uncle and five brothers were in the Botley Brass Band, and all were in the Volunteers. Father was a crack shot and won a lot of prizes.

In my school days, before the north aisle was built, there was a gallery at the west end of the Church wheret he children sat. Mr. Bailey's father kept order there with a long stick, with which he tapped the head or shoulder of any child who fidgeted.

(Next instalment at some later date.)



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No. 13. Flowers of Wondrous Beauty.

HYMN FOR FLOWER SERVICE.

JOHN KING.

J. K.

(Harmonized by Dr. PRENDERGAST,
Organist of Winchester Cathedral.)

1. O God of love, with - in Thy house Thy chil-dren glad-ly ga - ther.
2. We ren - der spe - cial thanks to - day, As is our boun - den du - ty.
3. As mes - sen - gers of love, O Lord, We fain would use these flow - ers,
4. Oh, may they shed a ray of hope On all who pine and lan - guish,

1. To ren - der sac - ri - fice of praise To Thee, their lov - ing Fa - ther.
2. And bless the boun - teous hand which gives These flowers of wondrous beau - ty.
3. That they may bright - en o - ther lives As they have gladdened ours.....
4. And whis - per of a Fa - ther's love To those in pain and an - guish;

1. Not on - ly are our needs sup - plied In free and full - est mea - sure,
2. Lord, Thou hast made them pass - ing fair, And taught in Bi - ble sto - ry
3. We of - fer them, and hum - bly pray Thy bless - ing may at - tend them;
4. To all who mourn, sweet com - fort bring, And give them songs for sigh - ing;

1. But Thou hast giv - en much be - side To give us joy and plea - sure.
2. That Sol - o - mon could not compare With these, ar - rayed in gio - ry.
3. And pros - per - Thou the mis - sion work On which Thy ser - vants send them.
4. And speak of re - sur - rec - tion joy To those who now are dy - ing.

5. Oh, may our lives be like these flowers,
Adorned with heavenly graces;
And when dark clouds of sorrow hour,
Still heavenward turn our faces.
When over-anxious cares arise,
And trials seem o'erbearing,
Oh, may they shame our "little faith,"
And teach us Thou art caring.

6. All praise to God the Father be,
Who ordered all creation;
All praise to God the Son Who gave
His life for our salvation;
All praise to God the Holy Ghost,
Whose sanctifying powers
Will cleanse our lives and make us meet
For heaven's eternal bowers.

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LONDON: "MUSICAL JOURNAL" OFFICE, 22, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

Hymn for Flower Service.

Come ye children, lift your voices,
Grateful homage let us pay,
Unto God sing songs of gladness
On your Floral Festival day.

Praise Him as your King, Creator,
Who has made this world so fair ;
Tokens of His love to mankind
Manifested everywhere.

Praise Him who, in wondrous wisdom,
Filled this world with various store,
Made one grand and vast provision
For man's need for evermore.
Nothing new has since been added,
Nothing waste has been removed ;
"Very good" He then pronounced it,
"Very good" it aye has proved.

And not only things man needed,
Much was given to make him glad :
Plants and shrubs of wondrous beauty,
Trees with richest verdure clad,
Birds that cheer us with their singing,
Pleasant tasted fruits abound,
Many-coloured, fragrant flowers,
In our gardens and around.

But He willed that all His children
These, His bounteous gifts, should share,
And the weak he hath commended
To their stronger brethren's care.
So, His law of love fulfilling,
We have brought these flowers to-day,
For His weak and suffering children,
Who on beds of sickness lay.

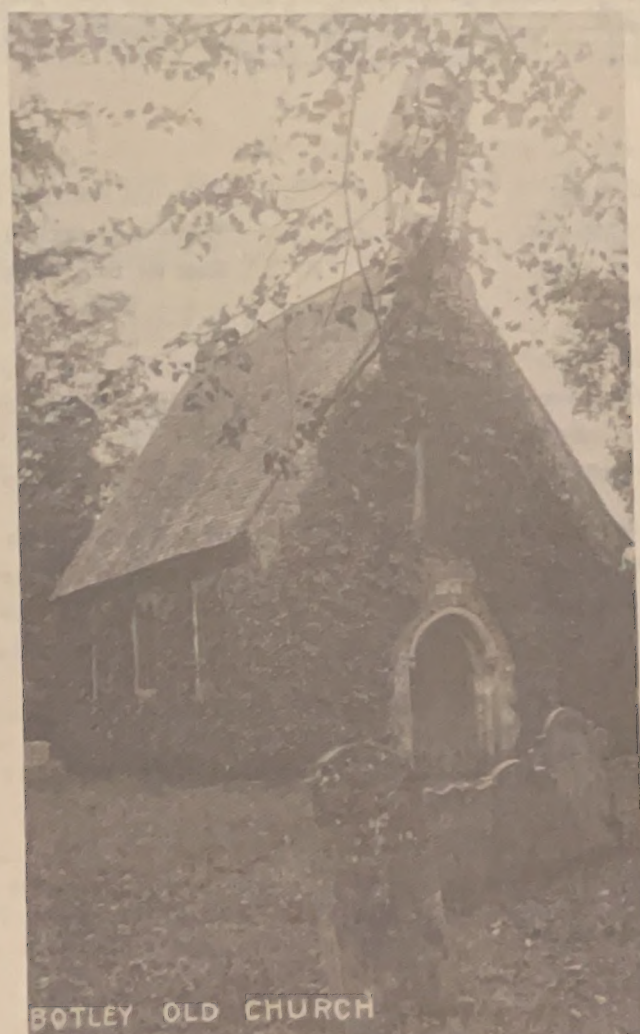
Bless, Lord, bless these flowers as tokens
Of our sympathy and love,
That they to the worn and helpless
Harbingers of hope may prove.
Teach them in their sore affliction
That the Father's love is sure ;
And that He who cares for flowers
Careth for His children more

May our lives be like these flowers,
Pure and lovely, fair and bright,
Shedding fragrance all around us,
Giving pleasure and delight,
Till we reach that land of beauty
Where the sunshine needs no shade,
Walk with Thee in Heavenly gardens
'Midst the flowers that never fade.

AMEN.

J. KING.

Botley, Hants.



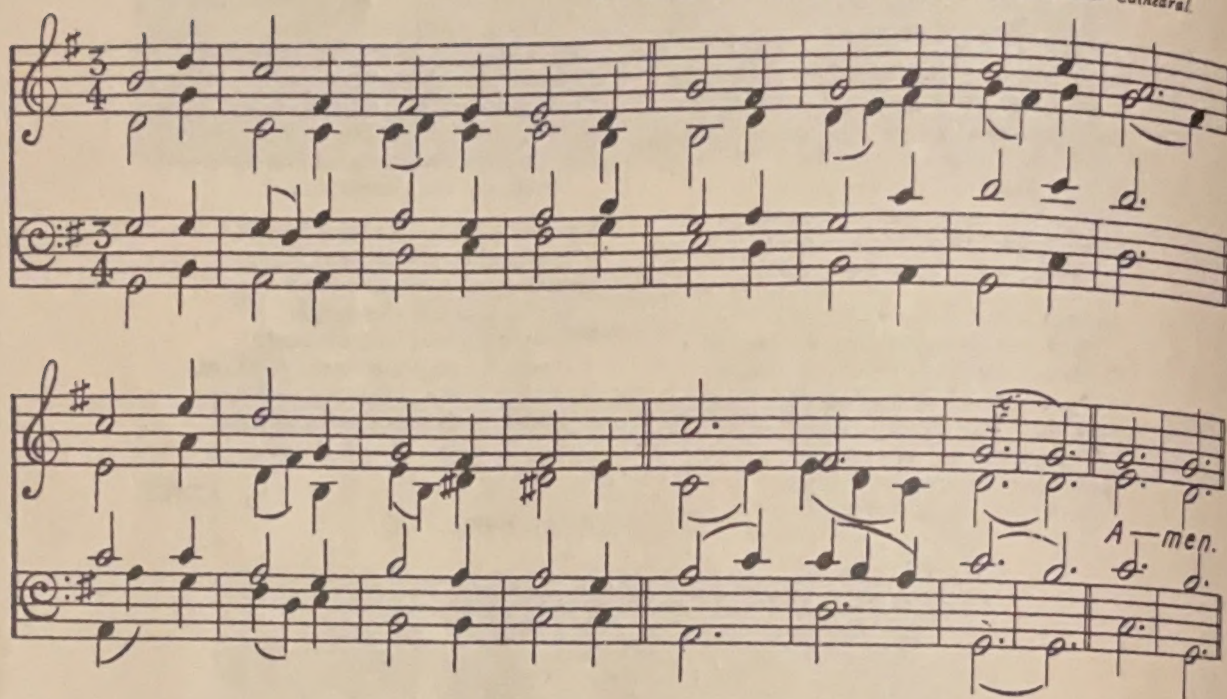
BOTLEY OLD CHURCH

"The Old Church of Botley Where John King
used to cut the grass with his scythe"

At His Side.

JOHN KING.

Harmonised by DR. PRENDERGAST, Organist, Winchester Cathedral.



Jesus, in the hour of danger,
I would flee to Thee and hide,
Find for me a place of safety
At Thy side.

When the "World," the "Flesh" or "Devil"
Urge or tempt to what is wrong,
Give me of Thy grace sufficient,
Make me strong.

When life's pathway seems perplexing,
Lest I wrongfully decide,
Take my hand, and lead me onward,
Be my Guide.

Pass with me the gloomy river,
Bear me o'er its whelming tide,
Then my place shall be for ever
At Thy side.

When the storms of life break o'er me,
Waves of passion surge and roar,
Steer my bark, though tempest shattered,
Safe to shore.

Worn with grief, or pain, and anguish
Wearied eyes their vigils keep,
As to "Thy beloved" grant me
Gift of sleep.

When I enter death's "dark valley,"
And my spirit shrinks with fear,
Speak, Lord, speak to reassure me,
Words of cheer.

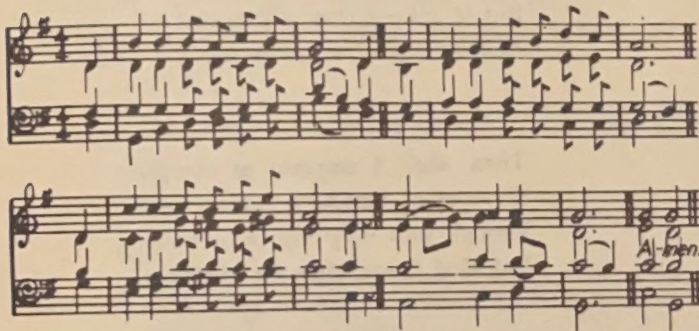


" The present church at Botley
showing the original entrance "

"THY WAY, NOT MINE."

JOHN KING.

Harmonised by DR. PRENDERGAST, Organist, Winchester Cathedral.



O SAVIOUR, take my heart to-day,
I only yield Thee what is Thine,
And may I now and ever say,
"Thy way, not mine."

I strayed in paths of mine own seeking,
I would not heed Thy voice divine,
But now I fain would hear Thee speaking.
"Thy way, not mine."

What if "the way" be dark and lonely,
No ray of light upon it shine,
If I may have Thy presence only,
"Thy way, not mine."

Or if "the way" be smooth and pleasant,
To ease and comfort all combine,
O may this thought be ever present,
"Thy way, not mine."

If in my calling or vocation
I would aspire to rise and shine,
Unless it win Thine approbation,
"Thy way, not mine."

If in the daily round of duty,
Some irksome task Thou should'st assign,
O may I count it joy and beauty,
"Thy way, not mine."

If with some fierce and fiery trial,
My heart from dross Thou would'st refine,
Through sacrifice and self-denial,
"Thy way, not mine."

If what I value most and treasure,
Thou Lord should'st call me to resign,
Give of Thy grace a greater measure,
"Thy way, not mine."

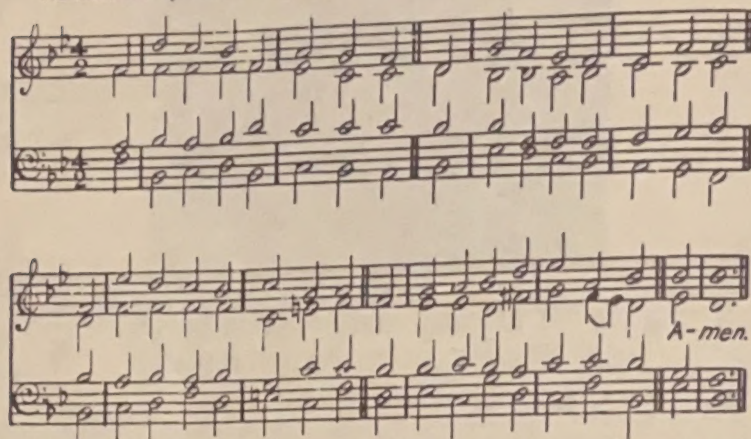
And when I enter "death's dark valley,"
And life runs swift to its decline,
My fainting hope round this shall rally,
"Thy way, not mine."

Thus led by Thee through all life's stages,
Until the heavenly choir I join,
This be my theme through countless ages,
"Thy way, not mine."

*This Hymn and tune came to the Author
in a dream.*

"All things work together for good to
them that love God." (Rom. viii, 28.)

Words and Melody by JOHN KING.
Harmonized by DR. PRENDERGAST, Organist, Winchester Cathedral.



How sweet, amid earth's weary toil,
When sorrows vex and sins beguile,
On God's own promised Word to rest,
To know He worketh for the best.

Though darkening clouds my path obscure,
It is that I should trust Him more;
And this shall set my fears at rest,
My God is working for the best.

He knows that I should often stray
If bright my lot and smooth my way;
He sends sore trials my faith to test,
Yet still He worketh for the best.

Though worn with grief, or toil, and care,
Though racked with pains I scarce can bear,
This comforts me when most distress—
My Father worketh for the best.

I cannot always understand,
Or trace the working of His Hand;
But if I love Him I can rest
Assured that He works for the best.

Then, shall I murmur or complain
Since what befalls is for my gain?
Though foes may injure or molest,
Yet God is working for the best.

Soon will my course on earth be run,
Faith's battles fought, its victories won;
Then I shall sing with all the blest,
God has indeed worked for the best.

BOTLEY,

July 2nd, 1916.

JOHN KING.

EASTER

" Now is Christ risen from the dead "(1 Corinthians. 15. 20.)

" Christ is risen from the dead ",
Let the joyful news be spread;
Tell it out from shore to shore
" Christ is risen, He dies no more, Alleluia ".

"Christ is risen from the dead",
He hath "bruised the Serpent's head".
He hath conquered death and sin,
We too, may the victory win, Alleluia,

"Christ is risen from the dead;"
"On the third day," as he said;
He, the victor in the strife,
Won for us eternal life, Alleluia.

"Christ is risen from the dead;"
Death's cruel sting no more we dread.
He who died our souls to save,
Gives us victory o'er the grave, Alleluia.

"Christ is risen from the dead;"
All our sins on him were laid;
He the path of suffering trod,
Reconciling us to God, Alleluia.

"Christ is risen from the dead;"
He hath suffered in our stead;
Spread the glorious new around,
Unto earth's remotest bound, Alleluia.

Botley, April 10th 1922.

John King



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Reprinted from the "HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE" of
September 23rd, 1922.

HYMN FOR HARVEST.

"Thou hast reserved unto us the appointed
week of harvest," Jeremiah 5, 24.

All hail, to the Lord of the Harvest,
We sing with joy to-day,
In Thy temple courts we gather,
And grateful homage pay,
For the fruits of earth we thank Thee,
For Thou, with liberal hand,
Hast blest our work, and hast scattered
New plenty o'er the land.

The appointed week of the Harvest
Thou hast reserved, O Lord,
Now the golden grain is garnered,
And all is safely stored.
For Thou hast redeemed Thy promise
Made to man in ages past—
That the seedtime, aye, and the harvest,
Shall be while Earth doth last.

Of old, when earth's fruits were gathered,
The Jews, Thou didst command,
To appear in Thy House, before Thee,
Not come with empty hand.
So we, at this "Festal Service,"
Like them in days of yore,
Would lay our gifts on Thine altar,
As Thou hast blest our store.

In our joy bid us to remember,
The last dread day will come,
When Thine Angels will be the reapers,
To gather Thy "Harvest Home."
When the "Tares" from the wheat severed

Then grant that we, O Lord,
May find a place in Thy garner,
With the good seed, safely stored.

JOHN KING.

Botley, September, 1922



"Strawberry pickers at Botley in the old days"

Christmas Song.

Hark! the bells are gaily ringing
From each steeple far and near,
Joyful tidings they are bringing—
Happy Christmas time is here;
List a moment, 'tis a pleasure,
And if you attention pay,
As they gaily chime in measure
You will soon to hear them say—

[CHORUS.]

Christmas time is the time for gladness,
Therefore let your hearts be gay,
Cast aside all care and sadness
And be happy while you may.

Let us pause and look around us
And I think that we shall see
With the blessings that surround us
We indeed should happy be.
Friends who long time have been parted
Meet together once again;
These, so merry, joyous-hearted,
Join the bells, repeat the strain—

[CHORUS.]

Christmas time is the time, etc.

Let us deck the walls with holly,
Mistletoe and evergreen,
Let no shade of melancholy
On our faces now be seen.
Recollect that at this season,
Nineteen hundred years ago,
Angels, singing, gave the reason
For man's happiness below.

[CHORUS.]

Christmas time is the time, etc.

When the nights are long and dreary,
And the days are cold and short,
Lest of Winter we should weary
Christmas comes to cheer the heart,
Comes with mirth and comes with gladness,
Comes with music and good cheer;
Lifts the heart from brooding sadness
At the closing of the year.

[CHORUS.]

Christmas time is the time, etc.

Let's remember in our pleasure
All are not so blest as we,
Let us strive in some slight measure
To relieve stern poverty.
Gifts, though small, with words of kindness,
Help to cheer the hearts that ache,
Let us not, in selfish blindness,
Lose one chance—but strive to make

[CHORUS.]

Christmas time a time of gladness,
Make the hearts of others gay,
Help to banish care and sadness,
Make them glad on Christmas Day.

J. KING.

Botley, Hants.

Christmas Greeting.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Brightly, ~~Oh~~, brightly, shone the stars,
Shepherds watch were keeping
In the fields near Bethlehem,
While the world lay sleeping.
Suddenly with dazzling light
From the realms of glory
Came an Angel, clad in white,
With a wondrous story.

Oh! those shepherds were dismayed,
Doubts and fears oppressed them,
Till the Angels, drawing near,
Kindly thus addressed them—
"Banish gloomy doubts and fears,
Cast away all sadness,
Lo! I bring to all mankind
News of joy and gladness."

"Christ! the Saviour, born to-day,
Layeth in a manger,
Bethlehem's inn could find no room
For the Heavenly Stranger.
Meanly wrapped in swaddling bands,
He, the High and Holy,
Stoops to save a fallen world,
Lowest of the lowly."

Then the heavenly choirs sang
Hymns of exultation;
Earth had no such music heard
Since the world's creation.
They sang "Glory unto God
In the Highest, glory!
Peace on earth, good will to men"—
Thus their wondrous story.

Echoes of the Angels' song
Still on earth are ringing,
But amid the jarring strife
Men heed not their singing.
Jesus, grant that wars may cease,
Hear our earnest pleading;
Thy blest presence, Prince of Peace,
We are sorely needing.

Botley, Dec., 1916.

JOHN KING.

Hymn to be used in Time of War.

LIÈGE

JOHN KING.

Harmonised by DR. PRENDERGAST, Organist, Winchester Cathedral.

Lord of Hosts, Who here-to-fore Hast shown Thy mighty pow-er, And proved to all who

trust-ed Thee A Ref-uge and strong Tow-er; On Thy pro-tec-tion we re-ly In this our hour of

dan-ger, Let not our land be trod-den down By ruth-less foe and stran-ger. A-men

Bless Thou our King, his Council's bless,
Be Thou at hand to guide them,
That they, when weighty problems rise,
With wisdom may decide them;
Our Forces guard by land and sea,
Let Thy right hand sustain them,
And from all deeds of sin and shame
O may Thy grace restrain them.

We thank Thee that all hearts beat true
Where England's flag is flying,
That fires of patriotism burn,
Unquenchable, undying.
All hold their country's honour dear,
A thing of joy and beauty;
To keep it stainless, free from shame,
Our privilege and our duty.

Lord, comfort all the hearts that mourn
Some loved and lost relation;
Alas! the numbers will be great
In every rank and station.
The widows and the fatherless—
O may we ne'er neglect them,
But for their sakes, who for us died,
Still nourish and protect them.

"Peace on the earth," Thine Angels sang;
O hasten, Lord, that hour
When wars shall cease in all the world,
The sword no more devour:
When in the brotherhood of man
All tribes and nations gather,
And with united voice proclaim
Thee as their common Father. Amen.

"He scattereth the people that delight in War."

Psalm 68 30.

1. O Lord, our Refuge and Strong Tower,
Guard Thou, our land, in danger's hour ;
Stretch forth Thy Hand, protect our coasts,
Against the foeman's lawless hosts.
 " Arise, O Lord, and scatter far,
 The people that delight in War."
2. Lead, Thou, our armies in the field,
Be Thou their succour, strength, and shield ;
O give them patience to endure,
And in the end, make victory sure.
 " Arise, O Lord, and scatter far,
 The people that delight in War."
3. Be with our Sailors on " the deep,"
By night, by day, watch o'er them keep ;
O may Thy strong arm intervene,
To save from " Mine " and " Submarine " .
 " Arise, O Lord, and scatter far,
 The people that delight in War."
4. Preserve and keep the captive band,
Our prisoners, in an " alien land " ;
Do Thou restrain the tyrant's will,
Frustrate his plans to treat them ill.
 " Arise, O Lord, and scatter far,
 The people that delight in War."
5. We drew the Sword in " Freedom's Cause,"
Our foes, in scorn, defied all laws ;
With lofty arrogance, and pride,
All solemn " Treaties " swept aside.
 " Arise, O Lord, and scatter far,
 The people that delight in War."
6. We long for peace, but still must fight,
Lest WRONG should triumph over RIGHT ;
Our noblest sons we freely give,
That all mankind in peace may live.
 " Arise, O Lord, and scatter far,
 The people that delight in War."

BOTLEY.

June, 1917.

JOHN KING.

IN MEMORIAM
THE LADS WHO NEVER RETURNED

They urge us to keep the home fires a-burning,
To make the old homestead look cheery and bright,
In view of the time when our lads are home-coming,
As heroes, who battled, and won in the fight.
And we look for that day, which we trust is fast nearing,
The welcome the dear ones for whom our hearts yearn,
But alas, our great joy will be mingled with sorrow,
As we think of the lads who will never return.

At the call of their country they volunteered freely
To fight 'neath her banner, for Right against Wrong;
They knew that the issues were Serfdom or Freedom,
They knew that the foemen were ruthless and strong.
Though greatly out numbered they flinched not nor faltered,
In facing the foe they were resolute and firm,
They fought till the death, but they scorned to surrender
Those brave lads of ours who will never return.

Now in the Far East they are some of the sleeping,
Many others in France found a last resting place,
On many a shore, and in the vast Ocean
They lie in those graves which we never shall trace.
Some died in war, some of sickness or famine,
Some of thirsts in the desert, where Afric's suns burn.
But all of them died whilst performing their duty,
Those heroes of ours who will never return!

Yes they all "did their bit" but failed in attaining,
They reached not the goal they all had in view,
"It is up" now to us that task to accomplish,
We owe it to them to see the job through.
Shall we desert "The Cause" for which they have suffered?
Shall their "Supreme Sacrifice" be made all in vain?
Ah, no! we will fight till our cause is triumphant,
For the sake of those lads who will ne'er come again.

On the proud "Roll of Honour" their names are recorded,
And we look on that list with sorrow and pride,
Sorrow because of those loss of our dear ones,
Pride that while fighting for a good cause they died.
A permanent memorial we must erect later,
That all who come after may "read, mark and learn"
The names of our heroes who in the great worldwar
Went bravely to battle, but failed to return.

Botley, July 13th 1918.

JOHN KING.

THE R.G.A. AT BOTLEY

Four hundred an forty-four men,
Hale, hearty, and stronge,
Into the village with swinging step,
See them marching along;
The thronging crowd line up the street,
The children shout "Hooray",
All with a hearty welcome greet
The men of the R.G.A.

Four hundred and forty-four men
Billeted here for the night;
Ours the pleasant duty to see
That they are treated aright.
The teachers and bairns at the National Schools
Made all their rooms look gay,
Provided minerals, fruit and "fags"
For the men of the R.G.A.

Four hundred and forty-four men,
For a while our honoured guests,
All of us eager to entertain,
Anxious to do our best,
Some folk made the great mistake
(Gainst which we are warned each day)
Of mistaken kindness in "treating"
The men of the R.G.A.

FOur hundred and forty-four men,
Hale, hearty, and stronge,
Out of the village with swinging step,
See them marching along;
Then ho, what a pleasant surprise
To cheer and hearten their way-
Fruit, sweets, tobacco, and "fags"
For the men of the R.G.A.

Four hundred and forty-four men,
Why of them make a fuss?
Because we knew they were off to the Front,
Going to fight for us.
We knew those silent guns
Would be trained the "Huns" to slay,
And we knew the guns will be well served
By the men of the R.G.A.

Four hundred and forty-four men
(Never a shirker ther)
If any shirkers were to be found
They were looking on in the square.
These men with faces firmly set
Would not flinch in the fray;
For England's honour would fight to the death
The men of the R.G.A.

JOHN KING

Botley March 4th, 1915.

BRAVO, BOTLEY!—"OUR LADS."

We gave to our lads a ripping send off,
Who had come at their country's call,
A fine strong batch came up to the scratch,
They were just twenty-five in all.

Population? One thousand and twelve,
We may claim we are giving our share,
For now, dye ken, we have one hundred men,
Who will fight for "The Flag" anywhere.

Folks sneeringly said our lads were afraid,
Lacked courage to come to the front;
They were "slackers" and "shirkers," "loafers,"
"non-workers,"
Who would shrink from bearing the brunt.

False prophets they have proved everyone,
Premature, with their jeering and blame;
There talk was all rot, and the whole of the lot
Should be hanging their heads now in shame.

O, gay was our street when the crowds came to greet
Our bold Lads formed up in the Square,
Their sisters and mothers, their sweethearts and brothers,
And a lot of the "old 'uns" were there.

The teachers and bairns from the school came down,
And they gave us a pleasant surprise,
For they not only sang our "God Save the King,"
But the Anthems of both our Allies.

Our Rector in few, but well chosen words
Then gave them "God-speed" for us all,
And our sentiments voiced when he said he rejoiced.
They had answered Duty's stern call.

"Form fours," "Right turn," Sergeant Kilford
commands,

Then we all waved our hats as we cheered,
And we shouted aloud for we all felt so proud
For our lads who had volunteered.

"Quick march" the command, and now the brass
band
Breaks forth in a bold martial strain,
And the vast swelling throng goes surging along
With our Lads, to see them entrain.

A right royal salute of twenty-one guns,
Detonators, I ought to p'r'aps say,
Were fired on the line, the motive was fine,
And it heartened our Lads on their way.

The tram steams in, our Lads take their seats,
And the last good-byes are now said,
Now fond mother whisper "May God bless my boy,"
A like prayer ascends from each maid.

They are off, and the band plays "Auld Lang Syne,"
The crowd gives them three hearty cheers,
Our true women stands and waving their hands,
They watch till the train disappears.

Ah, yes, we gave them a ripping send-off,
Their hearts beat loyal and true;
But duty is plain for us who remain,
We may count it a great privilege, too.

They have left their homes and their dear ones
behind,
Entrusting them all to our care,
So whate'er betide we must stand by their side,
And help them their burden to bear.

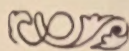
JOHN KING, Botley.

September, 1914.



"Sergeant Kilford, mentioned in Bravo Botley"

"WHAT IS FLIRTING."



OF late this question most perplexing
Has troubled much my anxious mind,
And I own although 'tis vexing,
I, the answer cannot find;
Yet folks when young men are engaged,
Are not backward in asserting
If with other girls they are seen,
That they are *fast* and fond of "Flirting."

How I wish someone would tell me
What a young man ought to do,
If at night-time he were travelling
And overtook a girl he knew;
Would you have him rudely pass her
On a lonely road deserting,
Or if he saw her safely home,
Would you say that he was "Flirting."

Or if perchance the rain was falling,
The fair one—no umbrella had,
If he offered no protection
You would say "that was too bad;"
Yet if he held the shelter o'er her,
The rain from off her thus diverting,
And lent his arm to help her on,
Would you say that he was "Flirting."

Suppose a young man at a party,
And his "best girl" wasn't there,
If he saw a lady lonesome,
Would you have him "act the bear;"
Yet if he sat and chatted with her,
The tedious moments thus diverting,
If to amuse he did his best,
Would you say that he was "Flirting."

Now these are but a few examples
Out of many I could find,
Which seem a choice betwixt two evils,
Either to "Flirt" or be unkind;
Of course 'tis wrong for any youth
His own, for other girls deserting,
But in cases such as I named,
Would you say that that was "Flirting."

BOTLEY.

JOHN KING.





"BOTLEY 'SIZES."

[Reprinted from the "Hampshire Independent," of Saturday, October 13th, 1917.]

"Who hung the man, without judge or jury?"
The question is shouted in sarcastic vein
By "holiday trippers" who come through our village,
Or by the gay youths who travel by train.
And when I was young this impertinent query
Was hotly resented by the man in the street,
And questioners found themselves in the dilemma
Of having to fight or make good their retreat.

"Who hung the man?" Well, this is the story
(Of course it all happened a long time ago),
It has come down to us in the form of a legend.
True or false, there are no written records to show.
At "The Catherine Wheel" a party of "Toppers"
Had met, and were having "A gay old carouse,"
In those times, you know, the custom was common,
Men often spent days, aye, or weeks, on "the booze."

They cracked their rude jokes, played dominoes or skittles,
And boasted of all they had done, or could do,
And some of their deeds bordered close on the marv'ous,
Highly exaggerated; hard to prove true,
They bragged, with some truth of their drinking capacities,
Each one averred he could outdrink the rest,
So after high words and a deal of palavering
They hit on a plan this question to test.

A gallon of beer for each of the party,
To be drunk at one pull from can, jug, or pail,
To be hung from a beam with a rope round his waistband,
The penalty assigned to the one who should fail.
They drank, one failed, and at once was suspended,
And just then some soldiers were marched through the town,
They rushed forth to see, and in their excitement,
Neglected to lower the hanging man down.

The soldiers were gone ere they thought of their comrade,
With fear and great trembling back to him they sped,
They found to their horror, as quickly they lowered him,
That life was extinct—their comrade was dead!
Do you ask me to tell you how they were punished,
That is one of the things we are left to surmise;
"The legend" is silent, so what I have written
Is all that I know of the Botley Assize.

JOHN KING.

Botley, October, 1917.

Reprinted from the "Hampshire Independent" Friday, August 11th, 1922.

'WIT VERSUS KNOWLEDGE.'

Some years ago, I forget the date,
There lived, and owned a large estate,
An esquire, one of the olden school,
One who followed the golden rule,
Who did the very best he could
To help his neighbour (as all should),
And very much beliked was he,
As all such men are sure to be.
He had many farms on his estate,
The rents of which were moderate;
Most of these farms were occupied
By trusty tenants, old and tried;
Men who tried, by skilful labours,
To make his farm outdo his neighbours,
And, when the good old squire died,
He was lamented far and wide.
His heir, a young man fresh from college,
Full of learning, full of knowledge,
Came down, and soon great alteration
Followed the man of education.
He called the steward, raised the rent,
Or notices to quit were sent;
Although the steward did protest,
The squire thought his own way best.
The farmers were much put out, I promise,
Especially one, "Old Farmer Thomas;"
His farm to him was very dear,
For he had lived there many a year,
Much money had spent the place to im-
prove,
And now, it seemed hard, he must move.
So he went to the squire at once, and re-
quested
For his short term of life he might remain
unmolested.
But very obstinate the squire proved,
Nor from his purpose cared to be moved;
But little hope would he advance,
"But yet," says he, "there is a chance."
Then he propounded questions three,
Which very hard appeared to be.
•They were meant to show superior know-
ledge
Over those who had not been to college.
"First, I want to know," said he,
"Where the centre of the world may be?"
Old Farmer Thomas shook his head,
"I'm no geographer," he said.
"Next," said this man of noble birth,
"Pray tell to me how much I'm worth?"
The farmer shook his head still more,
He never could tell that he was sure.
"Now for the third and last," said he,
"Pray tell me what my thoughts may be?"
Said the farmer: "Sir, I'm but a man,
And read your thoughts I never can."
Said the squire: "To this I will agree,
That you shall live on your farm rent free,
If, when three weeks have passed away,
You can answer these questions right
away."
All hope died out of the farmer's breast;
He left the squire's sore distress.
Now it happened, as he journeyed on,
He met his friend, the "Miller John."
Said the miller: "You look unhappy to-day,
Tell me the reason, old friend, I pray?"
Then the farmer told his life-long friend
The cause of his troubles from beginning
to end.
John, the miller, was a jolly old soul,
And very witty on the whole.
Said he: "Cheer up, my good old friend,
I'll manage this, on me depend."

The three weeks passed, the day came
round,
The farmer soon the miller found.
Said the miller: "My friend, don't think it
strange,
But, first of all, our clothes we'll change."
When the farmer's clothes he had put on
Straight to the squire off went John,
Sent in his name as farmer Thomas,
Said he had come according to promise.
Now Thomas and John were much alike,
And so the difference did not strike.
The squire, nor was he to blame,
For others oft had done the same.
As the farmer, he saluted John,
Enquired the business he had come on.
Said John: "I have come to-day,
To answer your questions right away;
And first you wish to know," said he,
"Where the centre of the world may be?"
Lend me your staff, put on your hat,
And I will quickly answer that."
They went to the park, and chanced
Upon a ring where fairies danced.
Finding the centre, the staff he inserted,
Then triumphantly asserted:
"Your first question's answered now,
There's the centre, that I vow."
"That the centre?" said the squire,
"That you will prove it, I desire."
"I beg your pardon," said the man,
"Pray, sir, disprove it, if you can."
The squire for this was not prepared;
That he was beaten, he declared.
"And, now, for question two," said he,
"Pray tell me what my worth may be?"
Said John: "You are of noble birth,
You wish to know what you are worth?
Our Lord was counted, while on earth,
But thirty silver pieces worth;
That you with Him cannot compare,
I feel quite sure you will declare.
At a little less we must draw the line;
We will reckon you worth twenty-nine!"
Said the squire: "Twice you have bested
me,
But you will fail with number three.
You must be more than mortal man
If tell to me my thoughts you can."
Said the miller, with a knowing wink:
"It's not so hard, sir, as you think.
I know your thoughts, sir, this I promise,
You think that I am Farmer Thomas,
You think me of the ground a tiller,
Whereas I am not, I am John the Miller."
The squire, cured of his conceit,
Owned like a man that he was beat,
Said, although he had been to college,
The miller's wit surpassed his knowledge.
The miller's wit he did commend,
And told him to assure his friend
That he should have his farm rent free,
As at the first they did agree.
So old Farmer Thomas continues to till,
Thanks to witty old John at the mill;
And the squire oft amuses his company
elele
By telling the tale of the old miller's wit.

JOHN KING.

Botley, 1922.

